

# MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

July 28, 2014

Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, Sierra National Forest

## Meeting Synopsis

At its July 28 meeting, the Dinkey Collaborative welcomed Washington Office (WO) and Regional Office (RO) personnel to observe the achievements and progress of the Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project. The meeting began with the WO and RO staff providing brief biographies of their careers and their experience with the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Programs (CFLRPs) across the nation. These introductions allowed members and public attendees to gain a better sense trust and build personal connections with the WO and RO staff. Following the introductions, various stakeholders gave presentations describing general information on the project accomplishments and goals, landscape assessment, adaptive management, monitoring, socioeconomic assessment, and public engagement. After lunch the WO staff and Collaborative members held an open discussion period regarding topics including landscape assessment tools, how the Collaborative can help to alleviate Forest Service constraints, public education and support, spatial and temporal scales for planning and implementation, and sustaining the Collaborative efforts beyond the ten-year timeframe. Each work group then provided updates on the ongoing and upcoming projects of the Collaborative, and members recommended by consensus that the Monitoring Coordinator position will continue to be funded for another year. The Landscape Planning Work Group provided an update on the progress of the Exchequer objectives by zone and the list of Proposed Action elements, which Collaborative members agreed to recommend to the Forest. The full Collaborative will meet again on September 17, from 10 am to approximately 4 pm, at the Sierra National Forest Supervisor’s Office, 1600 Tollhouse Road, Clovis, California.

## Contents

Meeting Synopsis .....	1
<b>Action Items and Agreements.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Welcome and Introductions.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Regional Office and Washington Office Opening Remarks.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Washington Office and Regional Office Information.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Washington Office Staff .....	3
Region 5 Office Staff .....	4
<b>4. What the Dinkey Collaborative has Accomplished .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Making Collaborative Planning and Restoration Work/ Open Discussion Period .....</b>	<b>6</b>
A. Prioritization Spreadsheet (Landscape Assessment Tool) .....	6
B. Public Education and Support.....	7
C. Spatial and Temporal Scales (Planning and Implementation) .....	7
<b>6. Ongoing Activities.....</b>	<b>8</b>
A. Cultural Burning Field Visit .....	8
B. Communication and Outreach.....	8

C. Response from WO to Fire Accounting Letter .....	8
D. Project Updates .....	8
E. Joint Fire Science Program Proposal .....	9
F. SCALE: Sierra Cascade All Lands Enhancement Project.....	9
G. Ecological Monitoring Plan Implementation .....	9
H. Report to Congress .....	10
I. Science Symposium.....	10
<b>7. Public Comment Period .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>8. Special Session: Exchequer Project Work .....</b>	<b>10</b>
A. Landscape Planning Work Group Update.....	10
B. Final Draft List of Proposed Action Elements.....	11
<b>9. Update on Draft Proposed Action.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>10. Closing Remarks .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>11. Attendees .....</b>	<b>11</b>

*This meeting summary paraphrases individual comments and suggestions from Dinkey Collaborative members. Statements do not indicate consensus of the group unless they are preceded by the words, "AGREEMENT:".*

*All materials are available to members on DataBasin.org, and general information is available on the Dinkey Collaborative website, [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sierra/dinkeycollaborative](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sierra/dinkeycollaborative) For questions please contact the facilitator, Mr. Dorian Fougères, at [dfougeres@ccp.csus.edu](mailto:dfougeres@ccp.csus.edu) or (916) 531-3835.*

## Action Items and Agreements

### Action Items

1. **Hon. Ron Goode** to circulate his Cultural Burning article to participants via **the facilitator**.
2. **Ms. Justine Reynolds** to circulate the save the date for the August 22, 2014 public open house event in Shaver Lake.
3. **Mr. Dirk Charley** to contact Ms. Jamie Smith regarding the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004.
4. **Facilitator** to provide the presentation materials, including the monitoring plan, to Washington Office participants.
5. **Mr. Craig Thomas** to provide Mr. John Crockett information on the Arizona meeting regarding the CFLR Program.

### Agreements

1. Members recommended to the Forest to continue funding for the Monitoring Coordinator for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.
2. Members recommended the final draft List of Proposed Action Elements to the Forest.

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor, represented the Forest Service and welcomed members and guests to the full Collaborative meeting. He introduced the WO and RO staff, highlighted aspects of the Collaborative's progress, and emphasized the significant offline participation in between these meetings that makes progress possible.

## 2. Regional Office and Washington Office Opening Remarks

Ms. Vicki Christiansen, Associate Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, US Forest Service Washington Office (WO), introduced herself and noted that this meeting was a learning experience for all WO staff to gain first hand knowledge about what goes on in Sierra National Forest. Mr. John Crockett, Acting Assistant Director for Forest Management and National Restoration and Planning Group Leader, USFS WO, reviewed the CFLR legislation by highlighting the five key components:

- Encourage ecological, economic, and social sustainability;
- Leverage local resources with national and private resources;
- Facilitate the reduction of wildfire management costs, through re-establishing natural fire regimes and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire;
- Demonstrate the degree to which various ecological restoration techniques achieve ecological and watershed health objectives; and,
- Encourage utilization of forest restoration by-products to offset treatment costs, to benefit local rural economies, and to improve forest health.

Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) Facilitator, reviewed the agenda items, meeting ground rules, and conducted member introductions. He also notified members that the August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Collaborative meeting and field visit were both postponed until September.

## 3. Washington Office and Regional Office Information

### Washington Office Staff

#### A. Mr. John Crockett

Mr. Crockett discussed his current position in the WO and how he came to work in Washington, D.C. Prior to working in the WO, he was a District Ranger on the Grandfather Ranger District

and worked on the Grandfather Restoration Collaborative. He also has experience as a Deputy District Ranger, Timber Management Officer, and Assistant Fire Management Officer.

**B. Ms. Vicky Christiansen**

Ms. Christiansen highlighted her positions in the U.S. Forest Service as Acting Regional Forester, Deputy Director Fire and Aviation Management, and Acting Director Legislative Affairs; as well as prior positions in Arizona and Washington State.

**C. Mr. Frank Fay**

Mr. Fay discussed his experience as a fire ecologist, and his background in fire, timber, resource planning, and forest planning. He highlighted his history in the local area, including Sierra National Forest, and described his background working with CFLRPs.

**D. Mr. Micah Thorning**

Mr. Thorning discussed his current position as Acting Wildlife Program Lead and his career history in the South. He noted his experience working with CFLRPs in terms of ecological monitoring.

**E. Mr. John Maria**

Mr. Maria reviewed his background in business operations, performance management, data processing, cost allocation, and fire costs. He also highlighted his professional connections to some of the stakeholders.

**F. Ms. Thelma Strong**

Ms. Strong reviewed her career history in budget and finance, legislative affairs, policy and regulations and as a Chief Financial Officer. She noted her connections for CFLR were primarily in budgeting and funding allocations.

**Region 5 Office Staff**

**A. Mr. Joe Sherlock**

Mr. Sherlock, Regional Silviculturist and CFLR Coordinator, highlighted his background in silviculture and forest management.

**B. Ms. Deb Whitman**

Ms. Whitman, Director of Ecosystem Management, discussed her involvement in forest management, fire, and professional technical support. She also highlighted her experience working with each the three current CFLRPs in the region.

**C. Mr. Barnie Gyant**

Mr. Gyant, Deputy Director for Resources, reviewed all of the departments under his position and his experience working with each of them. He discussed his career history in fisheries biology, fisheries management, ecosystem management, and watershed impacts.

#### **D. Ms. Shari Elliott**

Ms. Elliott, Budget Director, reviewed her background primarily in business operations. She highlighted the work she did in Washington D.C. as an Assistant Budget Director.

#### **D. Ms. Erica Nevis**

Ms. Nevis, Budget Analyst for the Ecosystem Management and Planning Staff, noted her history with the 3 CFLRPs in the region working on the financial distribution for matched funds. She also highlighted her work in New Mexico, Oregon and Washington State.

## **4. What the Dinkey Collaborative has Accomplished**

Mr. Kent Duysen began the presentation by reviewing the project history, location, zones, Collaborative partners, and Collaborative structure and committees. Mr. Craig Thomas continued by highlighting the at-risk species of concern and listed the past, present, and future projects. With each of the projects, he noted the project accomplishments, management unit groups, and project success. He also briefly touched on biomass removal and the partners contributing to the matching funds.

- Mr. Crockett asked about the condition of the biomass market and how the Collaborative is handling biomass removal.
  - Mr. Thomas noted that it was a challenging area where the Collaborative wanted to do more, and should be aided by the new statute in California, SB1122.

Mr. Mark Smith continued the presentation by identifying fire as the primary ecological disturbance process in need of restoration, and noted all of the key landscape categories of concern. He also reviewed the indicators, assessment process, implementation tools, ranking process, and the percentage of differences from the reference conditions.

- Mr. Crockett asked what the process was for taking into account climate change and landscape resiliency.
  - Mr. Smith noted that there are no reference conditions for climate change; however, the Collaborative is looking to restore the natural processes to make the landscape more resilient to climate change impacts.

Mr. Stan Van Velsor described the socioeconomic monitoring process, tasks of developing the monitoring plan, plan implementation and the Socioeconomic Assessment. He also highlighted the history of the first CFLRP Socioeconomic Assessment in California, beginning in April 2012. Ms. Justine Reynolds concluded the presentation by summarizing the past, present, and future outreach efforts of the Communication Work Group, including the Terra Bella Mill tour for elected officials, and the Public Open House events. She also highlighted successful Collaborative outreach efforts, such as conducting agency briefings, tribal engagements and the water panel.

Questions followed:

- Regarding the Landscape Assessment, Mr. Gyant asked for clarity on how the range was

established in the percentage of departure spreadsheet.

- Mr. Smith noted that they reviewed the available literature and in some situations had to make professional decisions based on this literature. Other members noted that it was the most difficult to calculate due to the lack of literature that was available in the region.
- Mr. Crockett asked how much agreement there was in prioritization on the structure of the spreadsheet.
  - Members noted that there was a consensus in prioritization among work group members and the Collaborative as a whole. It was a method for making subjective factors more quantitative.

## 5. Making Collaborative Planning and Restoration Work/ Open Discussion Period

### A. Prioritization Spreadsheet (Landscape Assessment Tool)

Mr. Crockett asked Collaborative members if there was a mechanism for validating the outputs, or if the mechanism was intended to be the Exchequer planning process itself.

- Mr. Rojas noted that the collaborative developed a very detailed vegetation map, assigned data to every polygon in the map, then assigned reference conditions to the data. To ensure the reference conditions were the appropriate, members read the available literature and made educated decisions based on the information provided. In terms of climate change, members considered the trends toward drier, hotter conditions, and are learning to adapt the management strategies accordingly.
- Mr. Porter added that the point of the assessment tool was to gain general guidance on what was the next area to treat. The score was not the final arbiter; the Collaborative then discussed what they felt made the most sense among the top three options.
- Mr. Smith commented that, yes, in practice, Exchequer is the test case. It is the first time the Landscape Assessment process was used, and the planning experience will identify what works and what does not. The indicators that were most departed led directly to the Exchequer project.

Mr. Harger asked members of the WO staff how the Collaborative can help to alleviate the FS constraints.

- Ms. Christiansen reemphasized that voices matter when trying to influence public policy.
- Mr. Gyant observed that there seemed to be a lack of representation from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, and California and US Departments of Fish and Wildlife.
  - Members noted that the Collaborative has actively tried to gain the participation of these agencies, but found that they feel that they are not strongly needed. Members have held smoke seminars and met with staff from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and other agencies to encourage consistent

participation, and have developed a good relationship with the District. When possible, the District has supported the group's efforts.

- The facilitator added that having a closer relationship to the RO staff has benefited the Collaborative.
- There was a strong emphasis among both members and WO/RO staff on the importance of collaboration and continued support from one-another.

## **B. Public Education and Support**

Members asked whether there could be more of an effort to educate youth about the importance of natural resources. There was concern that agencies only act when there is a crisis. Members recommended more preventative action and education.

- Ms. Carolyn Ballard, High Sierra Ranger District Fuels Management Officer, Sierra National Forest, listed several examples of children's programs that are currently in place including "Kids in the Woods," "Hands on the Land," "Science Days," etc. The problem may be that the information is not getting out into the communities. One way that Disney is spreading the word is through film; members noted that the movie "Flames" speaks about fire in a way that children can understand.
- A participant also emphasized the importance of the government-to-government relationship between Cold Springs Rancheria, a California Native American Tribe, and Sierra National Forest and the Forest Service as a whole. If Washington Office staff visited the Tribe on its land, they would be more aware of the concerns and issues being faced.

Mr. Crockett asked members what types of educational materials and resources are employed when conducting outreach.

- Ms. Reynolds noted that the Collaborative has been very successful in developing their educational materials. The Dinkey Collaborative has created a brochure, list of accomplishments, Frequently Asked Questions and a PowerPoint Presentation, all to be used for community education and support. The Communication Work Group has also compiled a prioritized list of agencies and organizations to brief.

## **C. Spatial and Temporal Scales (Planning and Implementation)**

Mr. Bagley pointed out that it was important to recognize that Collaborative efforts will need support when the 10 year time-frame ends. He asked WO staff if there had been any discussion of funding beyond the ten-year period.

- Members of the WO and RO emphasized that the work was not intended to be finished when the project timeline ends; rather, the Collaborative should learn from this experience and continue the knowledge and practices throughout the Sierra National Forest. The WO could not promise that there would be funding available after 10 years. The hope was that there would always be interest among stakeholder groups to continue the ongoing project, including fund-raising.

Members asked how the CFLR Program fits with the new Forest Planning Rule.

- Mr. Fay pointed out that the CFLRP efforts are increasing collaborative capacity. This complements the new Planning Rule, which emphasizes collaborative planning. In the

future, it might be that CFLRP efforts transition into one of many collaborative efforts that guide Forest planning in specific areas.

Members expressed concern for how the Collaboratives were being compared to one-another. Each Collaborative is managed so differently, some with professional facilitation, and some with individual project managers. Having both has benefited the Dinkey Collaborative significantly, and members recognize how importance of partnership and collaboration.

- Mr. Crockett affirmed the idea that Collaboratives with professional assistance and facilitation often make more rapid progress.

## 6. Ongoing Activities

### A. Cultural Burning Field Visit

The Hon. Ron Goode, Chairman, North Fork Mono Tribe, announced that his article on cultural burning had been published in News From Native California. The article highlights over 200 cultural resources that were once relied on to sustain the Indian People. He added that on Big Sandy Rancheria, there are currently three black oak orchards that could be potential restoration sites. When the Aspen Fire was burning, the gatherers monitored the smoke and harvested all that was produced from the oaks. The fire had positively impacted the oaks and the results were immediate. However, he noted that this is not often the case; in some cases it may take three years for the trees to produce. Monitoring will continue on the smoke produced from the French Fire as it continues to burn.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Hon. Ron Goode to circulate his Cultural Burning article to participants via the facilitator.

### B. Communication and Outreach

Ms. Reynolds informed participants of the Communication Work Group meeting discussion regarding the Public Open House event on August 22, 2014. She noted the group's primary focus now is getting community members and seasonal residents to attend. She added that the Logo Contest was successful with three submissions received. The group decided on one of the submissions and recommended a clearer flame presence to emphasize the need for more prescribed fire on the landscape. It will make a final recommendation to the full Collaborative in September.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Reynolds to circulate the save the date for the August 22, 2014 public open house event in Shaver Lake.

### C. Response from WO to Fire Accounting Letter

The Collaborative received a response from the WO that provided a positive affirmation of the use of protection funds as matching funds in the case of a wildland fire, such as the Aspen Fire.

### D. Project Updates

Mr. Keith Ballard reviewed the handout for the general project updates.

- A participant asked about the possibility of having timber harvest area in the Cold Springs Rancheria traditional territory.
  - Mr. Ray Porter, High Sierra District Ranger, noted that projects must go through the NEPA process. The best way to do that is to be involved in the project planning process and voice those concerns early on. Mr. Goode added that the LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) survey work was done in the area once before, but needs to be brought in again for more recent data.
  - **ACTION ITEM: Mr. Dirk Charley** to contact Ms. Jamie Smith regarding the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004.

### E. Joint Fire Science Program Proposal

Mr. Marc Meyer announced that the Dinkey CFLR had been awarded a grant for a project related to fire science. The proposal will evaluate the effects of the landscape scale treatments, what is being implemented on the Dinkey CFLR landscape, how it relates to Exchequer, and how effective the treatments will be under changing climate conditions. It will look at both the climate drivers and anthropogenic factors.

### F. SCALE: Sierra Cascade All Lands Enhancement Project

Mr. Stan Van Velsor provided a brief overview the SCALE project and listed the 4 primary areas of its focus:

1. Local contracting for restoration treatment work
2. Socioeconomic and ecological monitoring
3. Budgeting process (as it relates to how CFLR dollars are planned for and spent)
4. Lessons Learned

### G. Ecological Monitoring Plan Implementation

Mr. Van Velsor noted that the ecological monitoring plan was completed in November 2013 and implemented this field season. Based on some of the coordination that Ms. Susan Roberts (Monitoring Coordinator) is engaged in, gaps were identified in the monitoring plan and activities. They are currently looking into ways of addressing those gaps in subsequent field seasons. One of the challenges being faced is the amount of different databases that store data. To more effectively access and analyze data, Ms. Roberts is developing a tracking system so the data may be used in developing the annual monitoring report and aid in the adaptive management processes. Mr. Van Velsor also noted that funding is another challenge being faced, as a result in the increase of monitoring each year because new project activities are completed. Every year, the Monitoring Work Group (MWG), the Collaborative, and the Forest Service must approve the money that is used to support the work of the Monitoring Coordinator.

Questions and discussion followed:

- Mr. Stewart asked if Ms. Roberts was developing an interface between existing databases or creating a new database.

- Mr. Van Velsor noted that Ms. Roberts is primarily making it easier to access data within the existing databases, not creating a new one.
- Mr. Gyant asked what the main work of the monitoring included, and what it costs annually.
  - Mr. Van Velsor emphasized that the focus of the monitoring was the Monitoring Plan itself. The cost of the Monitoring Coordinator is \$40,000 of CFLR money annually.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Facilitator to provide the presentation materials, including the monitoring plan, to Washington Office participants.
- **AGREEMENT:** Members recommended to the Forest to continue funding for the Monitoring Coordinator for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.
  - **Members present:** Ms. Flick, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Bagley, Mr. Connor, Mr. Ashley, Ms. Freedman, Mr. Goode, Mr. Haze, Mr. Fidler, Ms. Stacy, Mr. Harger, MS. Reynolds, Mr. Duysen, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Smith.
  - Ms. Sarah Campe, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, asked not to be included in the voting process because although the Conservancy was a member, she was new to the topic.

## H. Report to Congress

Mr. Van Velsor noted that the WO is in the process of developing an ecological indicator template for each Collaborative to include in the annual Report to Congress.

## I. Science Symposium

Ms. Pamela Flick informed the group that the Science Symposium is expected to take place in November 2015 and planning will begin later this year. The facilitator noted that this symposium would provide an opportunity for the Collaborative to look at the long-term impacts of projects, and make adaptive management decisions based on the information gathered.

## 7. Public Comment Period

Ms. Madeline Wise thanked the Collaborative for welcoming her and other public attendees.

## 8. Special Session: Exchequer Project Work

### A. Landscape Planning Work Group Update

Mr. Mark Smith introduced the members of the Landscape Planning Work Group (LPWG) and provided a detailed update on the work that has been accomplished in since the full Collaborative's May meeting. He reviewed the original and additional Project objectives, including new "persistence objectives" for California Spotted Owl (CSO) and Pacific Fisher. Through using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) on the computer, he displayed the maps of CSO Protected Activity Centers and Home Range Core Areas, and compared them to the most frequented fisher habitat. The next steps in the Exchequer planning process are to:

- Assign objectives to associated zones;
- Look at vegetation information;
- Look at slope; and
- Discuss what “mechanical” means in each of the Zones.

## B. Final Draft List of Proposed Action Elements

The facilitator reviewed the final draft list and highlighted all of the changes that had been made since May. It was recommended that a map of the system roads and trails be included. The suggested language should read, “Open and closed roads and trails, including a map.”

- **AGREEMENT:** Members recommended the final draft List of Proposed Action Elements to the Forest.
  - **Members Present:** Ms. Flick, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Bagley, Mr. Connor, Mr. Ashley, Mr. Fidler, Ms. Stacy, Mr. Harger, MS. Reynolds, Mr. Duysen, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Smith.

## 9. Update on Draft Proposed Action

Mr. Smith notified members that the LPWG will meet for two days in August to:

- Discuss the prescriptions for stands with the objectives of increasing the percentage of pine and assuring the persistence of spotted owl
- Organize a Collaborative field trip in September; and
- Continue the development of the draft proposed action for October review by the Collaborative.

Mr. Crockett asked if the public opinion was being welcomed on ongoing projects.

- Mr. Porter responded by highlighting that the Collaborative stakeholders are representative of the public interest, and also that once the Collaborative planning process is complete, more public opinion will be welcomed in the NEPA process. This is how the CFLRP is structured – Collaboratives provide input before the NEPA process begins.

## 10. Closing Remarks

Mr. Crockett and Ms. Christiansen thanked members for attending and participating in the discussions. The group adjourned until the Collaborative field visit the next morning.

## 11. Attendees

- |                          |                            |                         |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Emily Adams, CCP      | 5. Keith Ballard, USFS     | 9. John Cielnicki, USFS |
| 2. Chip Ashley           | 6. Miles Baty              | 10. Narvell Conner      |
| 3. Rich Bagley           | 7. Sarah Campe             | 11. John Crockett, USFS |
| 4. Carolyn Ballard, USFS | 8. Vicky Christensen, USFS |                         |

12. Kent Duysen
13. Sheri Elliot, USFS
14. Frank Fay, USFS
15. Dan Fidler
16. Pamela Flick
17. Dorian Fougères,  
CCP
18. Marcia Freedman
19. Bernie Gyant, USFS
20. Hon. Ron Goode
21. Dean Gould, USFS
22. Amy Granat
23. Christina Hall
24. Stan Harger
25. Steve Haze
26. Iveth Hernandez,  
USFS
27. Andy Hosford,  
USFS
28. John Maria, USFS
29. Marc Meyer, USFS
30. Erica Nevins, USFS
31. Chris Oberti
32. Ray Porter, USFS
33. Cliff Raley, USFS
34. Justine Reynolds
35. Susan Roberts
36. Ramiro Rojas, USFS
37. Joe Sand
38. Joe Sherlock, USFS
39. Thelma Strong,  
USFS
40. Eric Smith
41. Gus Smith, USFS
42. Jamie Smith
43. Mark Smith
44. Erin Stacy
45. John Stewart
46. Craig Thomas
47. Micah Thorning,  
USFS
48. Stan Van Velsor
49. Cal Wise
50. Madeline Wise
51. Deb Whitman,  
USFS